

## **Clothing for Teen Girls in the 1970s**

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Teen clothing during the 1970s in Illinois was very original and rebellious. Changing from old styles to newer, with unruly kinds of clothing, clothing became more and more of a best-dressed competition, from hand-made shawls to five-inch high heels. This era set the standards for today's clothing, and Illinois followed the national trends.

Clothing of the 1970s for the upper body was very different from today's. Anything with an Indian, Asian, and peasant look was very popular. These included Indian fringes and headbands and traditional Chinese silk garments. Peasant blouses, tunic tops, and vests were also part of the trend. Tie-dyed and psychedelic patterned polyester shirts and knitted or crocheted ponchos were extremely popular in Illinois high schools.

Fashions changed drastically in the 1970s and they influenced girls in Illinois. During this period, girls started to wear pants, which was virtually unheard of before. Trends bent towards the unisex look: hip-huggers and bell-bottoms that were extra long were worn most of the time. Since many companies did not make jeans for women, most girls would buy jeans made for boys. In Champaign-Urbana, the more popular girls their clothes on the University of Illinois campus, where the stores sold more fashionable and appealing clothing. Very worn jeans were considered "in" at the time; some girls spent a long time bleaching their jeans to make them look worn and wear it with macramé belts, makeup, and beads. Many parents disapproved of their daughters wearing pants as they considered it to be unlike a girl.

Skirts were worn less frequently by teens because of the appearance of pants, but were in style. In the 1970s, three types of skirts appeared: the mini-skirts, the medium length skirts or midis, or the floor-length maxis. Styles included wrap around and a bit below knee-length skirts.

Other types of lower body clothing included the gaucho and hot pants. Gaucho pants were colorful, looked Mexican, and went just below the knee, usually accompanied by laced boots. Hot pants, which are short shorts, came from Europe and replaced mini-skirts. They were popular amongst the younger generation but were banned from certain parts of society. However, this was only popular during winter since no one expected them to be worn during the cold season with tights.

Shoes in the 1970s were incredibly outrageous. By 1975, to be “chic”, you had to have platform shoes with at least two-inch soles and five-inch high heels. In fact, they were so popular that many doctors were afraid that the shoes might cause the wearer's spine to be permanently damaged from the weight of these shoes. Clogs were also well liked since they were easily slipped on and off. These shoes could and would be personalized: they were decorated with fruits, silver, and hand painted stars. Other shoes included the Hush Puppies and go-go boots but in the summer, woven leather sandals were used.

Accessories in Illinois were very original and flashy. Beads, scarves, and jewelry were preferred. Huge gypsy hoop earrings, shawls, and hand-knitted ponchos—just to name a few. Purses came in a wide variety. There were purses made from old recycled jeans as well as purses made of vinyl and bamboo with drawstrings.

There were many popular looks of clothing at the time. Looks include the Annie Hall looks, pseudo Grateful Dead style, and tie-dyes. People looked to models and rock bands for the latest style; they included Twiggy and Janis Joplin. Twiggy was the world's first supermodel and had her own clothing line, the first being the Twiggy Dresses. Janis Joplin was a famous rock and roll singer who made triple-platinum albums and set many fashion standards.

Nowadays, teen girls take these things for granted. However, the girls of the 1970s paved the way for girls of the future to be able to wear what they want and still be comfortable. Future girls will remember the ladies of the 1970s for entering into the world of the forbidden and changing the lives of women forever.

[From Kathern Angell, Katherine G. 1970's (Oct. 15, 2004), <http://employees.oneonta.edu/angleikg/1970.html>” Lillian Evans, personal interview. 21 Oct. 2004. Lois and Alan Gordon, *1920-1989 American Chronicle*, Charles R. Jr. Grosvenor, *Clothing of the 70s* <http://www.inthe70s.com/generated/clothes.html>; Tim Hutton & Steven Warner *Twiggy* <http://www.twiggylawson.co.uk/fashion.html> (Oct. 25, 2004); Laura Joplin, *Official Janis .com: Biography* <http://www.officialjanis.com/bio.html> (Oct. 25, 2004); From Adele Suslick, personal interview (Oct. 14, 2004); From: Lisa. *Lisa's Nostalgia Cafe-the 1970's* <http://members.tripod.com/lisawebworld2/70s.html> (Oct. 14, 2004); From: *1970s* <http://www.geocities.com/FashionAvenue/1495/1970.html> (Oct. 15 2004); From: *Hot Pants. 2000* <http://www.badfads.com/pages/fashion/hotpants.html> (Oct. 20, 2004).]